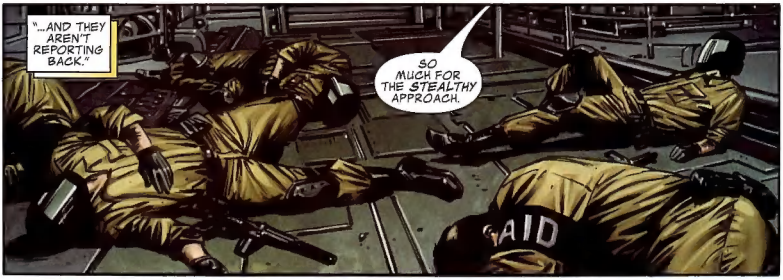
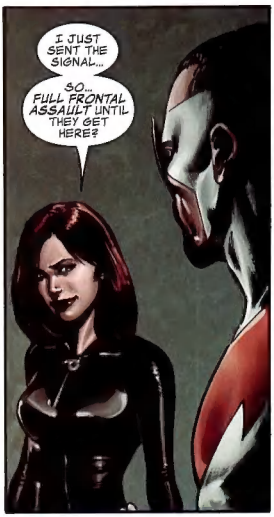

"...AND THEY AREN'T REPORTING BACK."
SO MUCH FOR THE STEALTHY APPROACH.
RAID

RAID...THIS IS THAT A.I.M. SPLINTER GROUP?
YEAH. RADICALLY ADVANCED IDEAS IN DESTRUCTION...REAL PSYCHOS. USUALLY WORK FOR THE RED SKULL.
YOU BETTER CALL IN THAT BACKUP NOW.


I JUST SENT THE SIGNAL...
SO... FULL FRONTAL ASSAULT UNTIL THEY GET HERE?

NOW YOU'RE SPEAKING MY LANGUAGE.
LET'S GO FIND OUR GIRL.

RRRRT-RRRRRT-RRRRRT-RRRRT-RRRRRT-RRRRRT-RRRRT-RRRRT
STOP THEM!
HOLD THIS LINE!
KRAKK
HOLD THIS--
--UURK!
WE HAVE VISUAL CONFIRMATION, DOCTOR...IT'S THE AVENGERS.
WHAT? THAT'S RIDICULOUS...HOW COULD--
IT'S JUST TWO OF THEM, SIR. BLACK WIDOW AND THE FALCON.
BLAST. ALL RIGHT, CONTINUE EVACUATION PROCEDURES. DESTROY ALL HARD DRIVES.
...AND BRING ME MY DAMNED PRISONER.

DANG. THESE GUYS ARE ALMOST AS BAD AS HYDRA.
WHAT'RE THEY DOING, TELEPORTING 'EM IN?
LET'S GO. I NEED THIS SHIP AIRBORNE... NOW.
WE DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR MISTAKES.
DOCTOR, WE JUST GOT A REPORT. THE PRISONER'S GOTTEN LOOSE.
WHAT?!
HOW INCOMPETENT ARE YOU PEOPLE?
AGENT 13...DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HANDLE A MAN IN RESTRAINTS?
OF COURSE, SIR.

FURY'S FILES

Discovered in a decommissioned S.H.I.E.L.D. safehouse, below is a list of little-known facts about the Avengers that Nick Fury had personally collected to be used or leveraged when necessary.

According to the original Avengers charter, "No Avenger shall be required to surrender knowledge of his or her civilian identity or personal affairs to the membership at large or the National Security Council."

Although having the appearance of a grown man, Rage was only thirteen years old when he joined the Avengers.

While on a leave of absence from the Fantastic Four so that they could spend more time with their son Franklin, Mister Fantastic and the Invisible Woman ended up temporarily joining the Avengers.

The Wasp came up with the name for the Avengers.

Kang, Rama-Tut, Immortus, and Iron Lad are all the same person but at different points in their life, living in different eras of time.

After a momentous victory, Hawkeye would often throw a barbeque for the team to celebrate.

Although Matt Murdock has acted as the Avengers' legal counsel, most notably when he helped them oppose Henry Peter Gyrich's attempt to shut down the team's operation, Daredevil has declined every offer to join the team.

Captain America served as the Avengers Chairperson 110 times throughout his membership in the team.

Ultron used the original Human Torch's body to make the Vision.

Firestar was originally created for the Saturday morning animated series, *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends* and eventually made her debut in Marvel Comics when she was recruited by Emma Frost to join the Hellions.

The Maria Stark Foundation has issued cease and desist letters to the Great Lakes Avengers for their use of the name "Avengers."

Avengers Mansion was located at 890 Fifth Avenue in New York City.

While acting as the Avengers' liaison to the United States National Security Council, Henry Peter Gyrich forced the team to trim their roster to seven members and replace Hawkeye with the Falcon to be in compliance with affirmative action laws.

In their earliest appearances, the Black Widow was a Soviet spy who tricked Hawkeye into helping her steal technologies developed by Stark Industries.

Actor Nicholas Cage changed his surname from Coppola to Cage based on the character of Luke Cage.

The Wasp had eight different costumes in the first ten issues of *The Avengers*.

PORTFOLIO REVIEW

He's a Greek demigod. He's been an Avenger. He's wanted for his actions in both *Civil War* and *World War Hulk*. But this December, Hercules has decided he's done running, and ready to face anyone, mere mortal or more, who dares challenge him! Joined by the breakout star of *World War Hulk*, Amadeus Cho, Herc takes over the mantle for his fallen comrade, as the *Incredible Hulk* becomes the *Incredible Herc*! Hulk scribe Greg Pak is joined by rising star writer Fred Van Lente and red-hot artist Khoi Pham on a book that knows no mercy, no fear, and no bounds. Zounds!

Here is a sneak peek from the creative team about the new direction, look, and action found in ***The Incredible Herc!***

"I was really excited to draw Herc and Cho. I love taking perceived second-tier characters and making them cool. For instance, there's not much more I could do to make Spider-Man cool, because, well, he's already cool. But a big Greek barroom brawler in a skirt and tiara and his Asian sidekick Short Round, I mean, Cho? Sign me up."
— Khoi Pham

"Seriously, Herc's a god, so I wanted to make sure he's depicted as such through his expressions and body language. And Cho's a pretty dangerous kid that needs to be drawn with a bit of an edge."
— Khoi Pham

"I love Khoi for totally rocking both the action and humor of the book. As just one example, panel 1 of page 17 is just a perfectly framed, amazingly dynamic comic book action shot, with great staging of our heroes and awesome missiles and smoke and debris all over the place. And there's a very surprised-looking fish on page 20 that I just love. Like Fred says, Khoi is giving us everything we put in the script and more, more, more, and we're loving every panel."
– Greg Pak

"What any comics writer wants is an artist who actualizes the script better than the writer imagined it, and that's what Greg and I have with Khoi -- he depicts Herc fighting off Kevlar-wearing capekillers with assault rifles equally as well as him hacking and slashing giant monsters in ancient Greece, which is exactly what this story needs, and I couldn't be happier."
– Fred Van Lente

THE INCREDIBLE HERC

DECEMBER 2007

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

DAN ABNETT & ANDY LANNING

MARVEL: *You guys are well-known for your sci-fi work here in the U.S. (such as* ***Annihilation*** *and the related series), in addition to your work for 2000 AD in the United Kingdom. What makes sci-fi such an infinitely interesting genre to you?*

DAN: I've always been a fan of science fiction, and grew up reading Vance, Heinlein, Herbert and the like. I also was a regular reader of *2000 AD* long before I was a regular contributor. The glib answer is that in SF, you can do just about anything. It's a venue for unbridled imagination. But I think the real key to good SF is when the imaginative possibilities are pushed, yet presented in a way they still seem credible and plausible.

ANDY: Dan and I have also always loved Marvel's cosmic characters and stories, especially Jim Starlin's work on Captain Marvel and Warlock. In a cosmic setting, a superhero costume becomes more of a uniform or a protective suit, rather than something you put on in a phone booth to protect your secret identity.

M: *You've also been involved in crafting some huge events for Marvel's space characters. What's it like to coordinate something so far-reaching?*

ANDY: Dan's written so many combat SF novels for Games Workshop, he's pretty good at keeping control of major plot structures.

DAN: We keep notes. Lots of notes. When we get together to plot and brainstorm, I bring a large holdall full of notes and photocopies and scribbled ideas. We've also been known to cover the door of Andy's office with Post-It notes, each one with a plot idea or character moment on it, so we can move them around and change the order of sequences. The real secret, however, is (editor) Bill Rosemann, who coordinates it all.

•SPOILER ALERT• *In Annihilation Conquest, your big reveal was that Ultron was the baddie. How did you coordinate that with Brian Bendis & his recent usage of Ultron in* ***Mighty Avengers****?*

DAN: We got the okay to use Ultron, and got to read Brian's first *Mighty Avengers* scripts in advance, which was a massive treat (both of us are BMB fans).

ANDY: I think *Annihilation Conquest* is going to have to cover the link between the stories, and how Ultron ended up where he did.

M: *You've been inundated with critical acclaim from all corners. What's it like to receive such universal praise?*

ANDY: Fantastic. It's great to hear that we're doing something the way people think it should be done. I don't let Dan read them. It goes to his head.

DAN: I'm really pleased we seem to be attracting the attention of people who are usually turned off by the word "cosmic." I certainly appreciate all the kind words.

M: *Everyone's got their favorite "unappreciated" Marvel hero or team they'd love to write. Who fits the bill for you guys?*

DAN: It's easy to pick the Marvel characters we'd love to take a crack at... The Avengers, Thor, Iron Man, Daredevil...

ANDY: Doctor Strange. The Fantastic Four...

DAN: Absolutely. Trouble is, none of them need fixing, as they're all being handled by such great teams. Which sucks for us.

ANDY: Maybe we can get the Secret Defenders back together?

DAN: What, for a benefit concert?

M: *Now over in Nova, you've been giving Rich Rider a hard time. Doesn't he deserve a break?*

ANDY: He certainly needs a kip*. We were thinking of doing an issue where he spends the whole thing catching up on his sleep.

DAN: Actually, it would be really interesting to find out what his limits are, even supported by the suit and the Worldmind. How long can he keep running on empty?

ANDY: As for the cosmic threats, invasions, emotional bumps... no one ever said it would be easy being a Nova Centurion.

M: *Reading Nova, he seems like a natural fit for you. When writing, does one of you act like Rich and the other act like the Worldmind?*

DAN: In terms of personal experience, when we're writing *Nova*, I tend to think about the time I spent serving two tours with the starcorps off Zeta Reticula.

ANDY: Actually, I think the personal experience we both draw on is our memories of reading *Nova* the first time around, of being kids when he was just a kid getting superpowers. We remember the excitement and the fun.

M: *Living in America, sometimes we forget how we appear to the rest of the world and don't realize how funny some things are (such as the massively large portions of food we serve). Any other humorous insights on America that readers might enjoy hearing?*

DAN: When we're in New York, we're often stopped by strangers who ask us to "say something in your lovely accent," which is exceedingly weird.

ANDY: You've got very nice trains.

DAN: He's easily pleased. The portion-size thing is absolutely true. I was in Chicago recently, and a waiter had to come out and "demonstrate the meat," such was the range and sheer scale of the steaks on offer. For desert, there was a macadamia turtle pie. Unable to move or remember my own name by that stage, I asked, mockingly, what form the turtle came in. The waiter, deadpan, told me it was the name of the basin they served the half gallon of ice cream in.

ANDY: Just one more wafer-thin mint, sir? I'm always amused by the differences that exist in one language. You say "aluminum" and we say "aluminium," you say "eggplant" and we say "aubergine," you say "herbs" and we say "herbs." Oh, that one doesn't work written down. There's an "h" at the start, people!

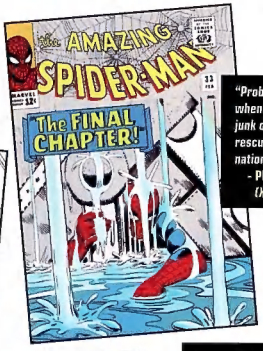
* In the UK, a kip is a holiday.

'Nuff Said!

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MARVEL MOMENT?

"When they hired me!"
- LEINIL YU – Artist
(New Avengers)



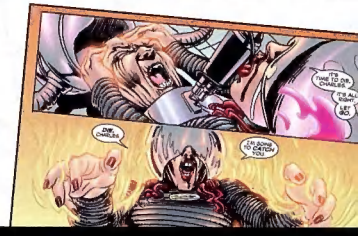
"Probably Amazing Spider-Man #33 when Spidey lifts the giant hunk of junk off himself so that he can go rescue Aunt May. A terrific combination of words and visuals."
- PETER DAVID – Writer
(X-Factor, She-Hulk)

"As a kid, Captain America getting killed in Infinity Gauntlet, what... five or so, really shocked me. I didn't know any better, so I thought it was all real permanent stuff. It was crazy. Now, it's gotta be something in the Lee/Kirby Fantastic Four run... there's so much to choose from."
- ROBERT KIRKMAN – Writer
(Marvel Zombies II, Ultimate X-Men)

"Kitty Pryde joining the X-Men has a very warm place in my heart. That was the issue I discovered the X-Men (and that Wolverine's name was Logan), so it was pretty magical for me."
- MARC GUGGENHEIM – Writer
(Amazing Spider-Man, Marvel Comics Presents)

OUT OF NOWHERE THEY APPEAR.
THIS ONE'S BEEN SHOT!
MERCY! OVER HERE, MAN!
PUT THOSE FIRES OUT WE HAVE A LOT MORE MAN'S GONE UP.
A SOLDIER WITH A VOICE THAT COULD COMMAND A GOD!..
...AND DOES.
Suddenly it's RAINING so hard in HUNTS.
Everybody who CAN FITS SILENT

"Payday! What, you mean comics moment? Oooh, good one and difficult to choose but one of my favorites was during Frank Miller's tenure as writer with David Mazzuchelli on Daredevil. In the last issue of "Born Again," the Avengers appear for just a few panels. There's the line about Cap telling Thor to put out the fires "with a voice that could command a god and does." That's the birth of Modern Marvel comics right there and it's clearly an ancestor of Ultimates."
- BRYAN HITCH – Artist
(Ultimates, Fantastic Four)



"Let go. Die, Charles. I'm going to catch you." "Phoenix holding Charles Xavier's disintegrating consciousness inside her own until his body can be retrieved from Cassandra Nova. Courtesy of Grant Morrison, in New X-Men #125!"
- MIKE CAREY – Writer
(X-Men, Ultimate Fantastic Four)

"Any worktime spent with my father."
- JOHN ROMITA Jr. – Artist
(World War Hulk, Amazing Spider-Man)

NOW YOU KNOW!